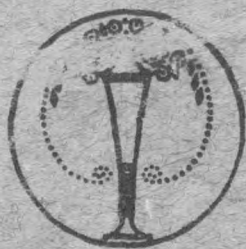


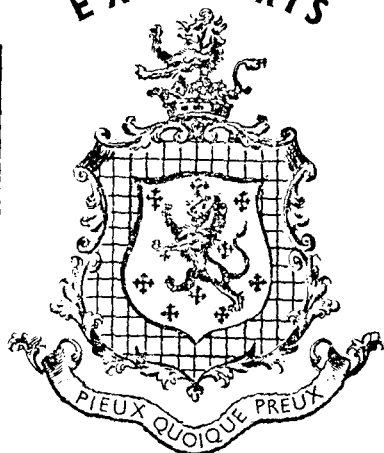
COLLINS'S CARD CONCEITS



— *by* —

Stanley Collins

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COLLINS'S CARD CONCEITS

— by —

STANLEY COLLINS

Author of
"Original Magical Creations,"
"Deceptive Conceptions in Magic,"
"Wizardry for Winter Evenings,"
&c., &c.

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Dedicated to
GEORGE BEALBY.

—

A cultured critic
and beloved friend.

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The "T-Square" Colour Change.

This is a particularly bewildering card change. The card which has to undergo the transformation is pushed into the centre of the pack held in left hand, as illustrated in Fig. 1, which shows the exact position of the hand and arm before the change is made. Turning now the back of the pack to the onlookers,

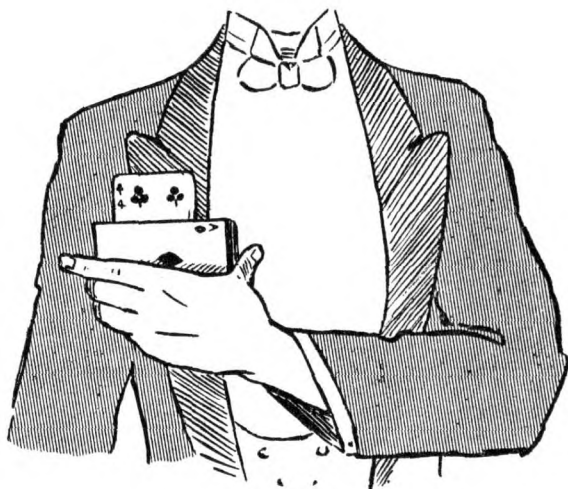
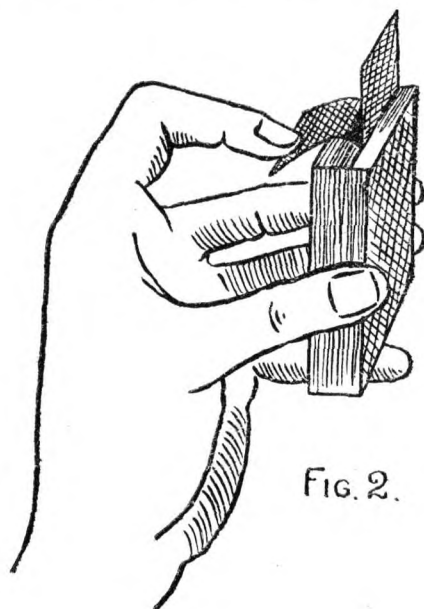


FIG. 1.

the conjurer requests someone to push the card completely through it. This is done as suggested, but on withdrawing the card from the pack it is discovered that it has changed into an entirely different one.

The expert student will have divined that two cards are employed, but the exact manipulation of them will doubtless elude him. The two cards, held together as one, are inserted into the pack and prevented from being pushed right through by the presence of the little finger of left hand, which is pressed on bottom edge. At this stage of the trick, the left forearm should be held horizontally across the body so that the pack is really exhibited in front of the right shoulder. To turn the back of the pack to onlookers, the arm is swung round on the pivot formed by left elbow, and it is under cover of this wide sweep that the move upon which the trick depends is made. Fig. 2 shows exactly what happens. With the tip of



the first finger, the top edge of the rear card is bent back so that it is completely out of sight so long as pack is held level with or above the eyes of the

beholders. Whilst the card which has been pushed through pack is being examined, ample opportunity can be found to square the protruding card with the others.

This may be very neatly accomplished by pushing the card right through the pack with index finger of left hand and then gripping the inner bottom corner in the fork of right thumb as if about to make the usual "colour change" so that the card may be palmed in the right hand and quietly added to the top of the pack.

Presented merely as a colour change, the trick can create nothing more than surprise, but introduced as part of the working-out of a magical card experiment, the effect leaves nothing to be desired.



The Comedy of Errors.

It is my honest belief that in offering my present readers this addition to their repertoire of impromptu card experiments, I am giving them a worthy successor to my "Omega Four Ace Trick," which gave a new lease of life to a moribund effect. Although the experiment under consideration has been a tit-bit in my own entertainments for over twenty years, this is the first time that an explanation of it has appeared in print.

The orthodox "selected card" preliminaries having been negotiated, the conjurer explains that he proposes to rely entirely upon chance for his success and therefore picks haphazard a card from the pack. This card not proving to be the one selected, however, is left on table whilst a second chance is taken. This attempt being likewise unsuccessful, the card is laid face down on table alongside the other to permit a third chance to be tried. This third card after being denied as the one selected, is put in right-hand trouser pocket. Professing now to be chagrined by his run of ill-luck, the conjurer states his intention of bringing the feat to a different conclusion, and proceeds to change the first card on table into the one selected. Not satisfied with this exhibition of his power, he takes the second card and likewise transforms that into the one selected. Professing now to read the thoughts of the company, he turns over the cards once more and shows that they are really what they origin-

ally were, adding that it must be so in consequence of there being but one card of the selected suit and value in the pack, at same time removing it from the trouser pocket, which otherwise contains nothing. When I add that this experiment can be performed without any preparation with a borrowed pack, it must make a strong appeal to all lovers of true artistry with cards.

The selected card after its return to the pack is brought to the top by the method favoured by the conjurer and the pack shuffled without altering the position of the top card. As it is necessary to know the third card from top, if this can be sighted during the operation of shuffling so much the better, but in any case such a glimpse is a matter of no trouble even to a non-expert with cards. To render my explanation more concise, I will presume that the King of Hearts has been selected and that the third card from the top is the Ace of Diamonds. The pass is now made and the little finger re-inserted between the two packets so that the original top three cards can still be under control. The first of these, the King of Hearts (*i.e.*, the one selected) is taken from pack and laid face down on table, care being taken that the audience does not catch sight of its face. Now comes the first subtlety. Lifting the edge of the card to see its face and apparently naming it, *the artist really calls it the Ace of Diamonds*, the card he secretly sighted in pack. This, of course, being disavowed by the drawer, the card under little finger (the original second card, which I will imagine to be the Four of Clubs) is laid alongside the first card. This is lifted and called actually by its name. At this stage, it being necessary to the presentation to impress the names of these two cards upon the minds of the audience, the drawer is asked to make certain that neither of the cards is his selection. Accordingly each is named

once more as it is turned up and, of course, repudiated as the drawn card. The "pass" again made brings the Ace of Diamonds to the top of the pack where it is left for the moment. The third card is taken haphazard from the centre of the pack and as its denomination is of no importance, there is no need to imagine a name for it. This card, the face of which is not shown to the company, is apparently put into the trouser pocket. I say apparently because in reality so soon as the hand is hidden in pocket, the card is palmed and a few seconds later added to top of pack whilst the company is diverted with the necessary chatter. It must be remembered, however, to get this card away from the top before the *dénouement* of the experiment is attempted.

Our plot demands that each of the two cards on table has to appear as a King of Hearts and this would appear to be a formidable proposition. The difficulty, however, is very deceptively surmounted by means of the false throw in the old race-course "Three card monte." Card No. 2 is placed on the King of Hearts and the King openly shown as the selected card. This, instead of being dropped on table, is retained and shown again as the second card.¹

Whilst showing this second appearance of the selected card, the top card of the pack, viz., the Ace of Diamonds is pushed slightly beyond the edge of the pack in readiness for the "Top change" which is executed in the act of turning to lay the card to the *left* of the one just thrown on table. These two cards now are really what the audience was led to believe they were at the beginning of the trick, namely, the

¹To those of my readers who may not know the manipulation of this very deceptive sleight, I refer them to page 117 of "The Expert at the Card Table," by S. W. Erdnase.

Ace of Diamonds and the Four of Clubs and as such they are eventually shown.

Nothing remains but to produce the King of Hearts from the trouser pocket, which although presumably holding a card, is in reality empty. The King is quietly palmed off whilst the audience is diverted by the last surprise and produced apparently as the one openly put in.



“Jumbo” Comedy of Errors.

Although a deal of ingenuity is being exercised by magicians to present standard card effects with the large “Jumbo” cards, comparatively few tricks are found to be readily adaptable. By merely making a few minor alterations in the routine, my “Comedy of Errors” experiment can be presented with these cards without losing any of its effect.

The first problem that confronts us is how to gain track of the selected cards. This is fairly easily accomplished by means of the “in-jog”—a not very euphonious title for an exceedingly subtle and useful card sleight which is described at length by Erdnase in his “Expert at the Card Table,” page 30. Although at the first few attempts, as indeed with all manipulation of the giant cards, the move may appear rather formidable, it is readily acquired if at the outset the correct hold of the pack be understood. The end of the pack held upright in the right hand must lie obliquely across the first joint of the index finger of left hand the outer corner projecting about an inch beyond the finger and the inner corner pressing between the roots of the third and fourth fingers. The little finger is crotched up so that the inner edge of the pack rests against it. Fig. 3 should make this hold intelligible. With the pack thus correctly held, the rest is “plain sailing.” As I request that the card be returned to the pack, my right hand, gripping the cards about an inch below the top edge, cuts to about half the pack and elevates it just above the other half, and a little in advance of it. The selected card is replaced on the original top, and a few cards from the

packet held in right are dropped on it, but allowed to overlap about an inch over the edge nearer the body so that the left little finger can form a break. The remainder of the pack having been shuffled off, I cut to the break at little finger and throw the packet on top. The chosen card is thus brought to the top of the pack in the most easy and deceptive manner and in the act of evening the cards, the third card from top can be memorised in readiness for the furtherance of the trick.

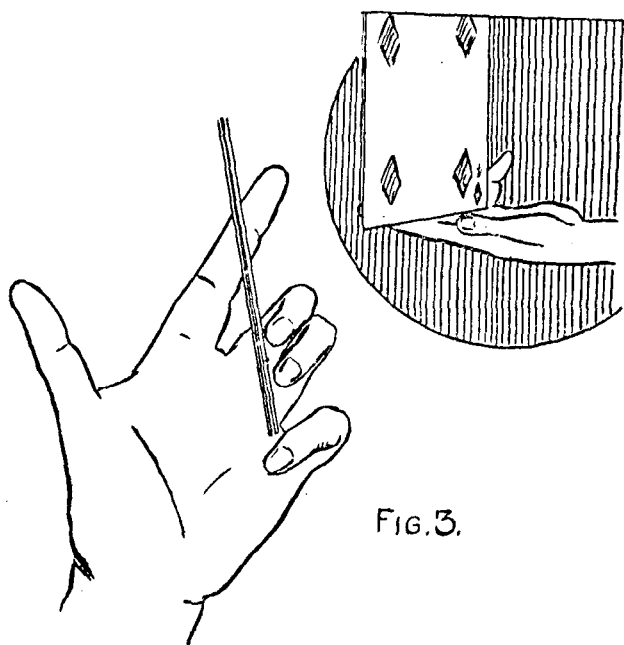


FIG. 3.

Now instead of making the "pass" to bring the selected card to the centre, I abstractedly pass a packet of cards from my left hand into my right which receives it between the thumb and first finger, and fairly shuffle the remainder of the pack on top of first finger, taking care that the end of pack toward onlookers shows no break. The desired cards can now be taken

from the centre of the pack and the trick proceeds as already explained until the two cards are laid on table. With the third card, however, I make a change in the working, for instead of putting it into my pocket, I lay it on table without showing its face to company. It must be understood that this third card has to be kept quite distinct as regards position from the other two.

It would seem that we are now faced with conditions that necessitate different handling. Precisely the same "three card monte" change, however, is employed, the only difference in the manipulation being that instead of the long edges, the *ends* of the cards are spanned. If the lower narrow ends of the cards are held between the thumb and second finger, the false throw can very soon be acquired by simply gripping the corner of the undermost card with the tip of the third finger as the top card is released by middle finger.

The "top change" leaves the selected card on top of the pack and this I naturally take to turn over the third card on the table, the "Mexican Turn-over" as it is called (see "The Expert at the Card Table," page 123), being even easier to perform with the giant cards than with those of orthodox size.



All Fours.

The preceding experiment leads naturally to this which is an amplification of the same idea. It is a particularly brilliant piece of work requiring a high degree of dexterity and very carefully considered presentation. Unless the student is a thorough master of that difficult but extremely useful sleight known as the "second deal," this effect is better left to more expert hands.

A little easel which can comfortably display three cards is a very useful, but by no means indispensable, accessory to the trick. The experiment is built up on a series of surprises and culminates in a perfectly logical way. Here is the effect expressed in the fewest words. To find the first of three selected cards which have been returned to pack, the artist takes the top card and shows it to be the Four of Hearts. This, after being disavowed, is lodged against easel with its back to the company. The card next shown is taken from bottom of pack but again it is a Four of Hearts. Another card from the top tells the same story, so that presumably three Fours of Hearts rest against the easel. Performer remarks: "This must appear to you to be rather an extraordinary game. As a matter of fact, I think it is called 'All Fours,' the cards being, as you observe, all of the same suit and value, viz., the Four of Hearts." Such, indeed, appears to be the case, but just at the moment when all are convinced that the pack is a special one, an examination of it by a representative of the audience, reveals the astonishing truth that the pack is normal save that *the Four of Hearts is missing from it*. From the pack

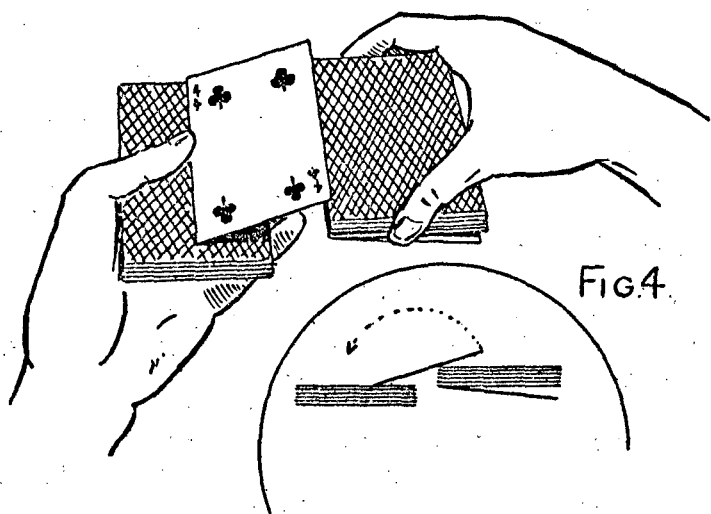
when it is returned, performer selects one and places it in the opening of his vest so that half of it remains visible during the course of the experiment. Finally the three cards against easel are shown to be the three which were selected and the one in vest opening proves to be the missing Four of Hearts.

The trick entails no preparation whatever and providing always that the cards have not been spoiled before they are handed to the artist, the effect may, without any apprehension, be presented with a borrowed pack. The three selected cards are freely drawn and must, as is usual, be brought to the top of the pack. Whilst rapidly passing the cards from hand to hand to show the audience that they are thoroughly mixed, a "four" of any particular suit is located and quietly put on top of the pack above the three selected ones already there. The actual top card, the "four" is now shown to the choosers of cards with the question "Is this card one of those already drawn?" Being, of course, disavowed, it is apparently lodged, face away from audience, against the little easel. Actually, however, it is "bottom changed" for the first of the selected cards, *i.e.*, the top one. With the remark, "This time I will take one from the bottom of pack," the undermost card is taken and shown to the on-lookers as the "four" which they imagine to be resting against the easel. In turning to lay it beside the other already against easel, the card this time is "top changed" for the second of those selected. The top card now taken and exhibited to the spectators shows apparently a third "four" which takes its place alongside the presumed other two. Actually, however, the "four" is again "bottom changed" for the last of the selected cards so that now, unknown to the audience, the three selected cards are lodged against easel and the "four" is at the bottom of the pack held in left hand.

At this part of the experiment, the conjuror remarks: "This must appear to you to be rather an extraordinary game. As a matter of fact, I think it is called 'All Fours,' the cards being, as you observe, all of the same suit and value, viz., the 'Four of Hearts.' The cards taken one after the other all show the same faces and no matter where the pack is cut or what number of cards are counted off, always a "four" comes to hand. This, the most difficult part of the trick to perform naturally, requires a non-chalant address and very accurate timing to produce a perfectly convincing illusion and many hours of close application will be necessary before ease and precision will be attained. The actual moves employed to produce the repetition effect on the eyes of the audience must be left to the caprice of each individual performer, but for the sake of completeness I will outline my own routine. The "four" left on the bottom of the pack after the last change, I show to audience by turning the face of the pack towards them. The bottom card of pack having thus been shown as a "four," I turn my hand so that the pack is held horizontally and slide the "four" back about half-an-inch with the third finger to permit the next card to be removed and put on top. This sleight, technically known as the "glide," repeated five times apparently accounts for five "fours" being on the top of the pack. The sixth time I perform the move genuinely so that the "four" becomes the top card. I now say, "Let me count off seven cards" and proceed to run off the specified number by means of the "second deal." The seventh card I show to be a "four," replace on top and next request that someone call out a number. This, when counted down to by means of the same sleight, reveals the "four" again.¹

¹For an explanation of "second dealing," see page 58 of "The Expert at the Card Table."

Still keeping the "four" on top of the pack, I add the loose cards to the bottom and cut the pack at about the centre. By means of the "slip" the "four" becomes the top card of bottom packet, and this time I display the "four" to the audience in a special manner in order to prepare my way for another subtlety. With my left thumb I push the "four" half-way beyond its packet, so that with the left edge of the packet held in my right hand I can give an upward tilt to the "four" and turn it completely over on top of its own packet. The tip of my right-hand third finger meanwhile separates the bottom card of its pack from the others so that in the action of again turning over the "four," I indetectably add the under-



most card of right-hand packet (Fig. 4). The packet in left hand I put upon that in the right hand and the top card of all which is, of course, presumed to be the "four" I transfer to the centre of the pack. A second later I show the "four" again on the top, whence it is conveniently palmed off to permit the examination

of the pack to be undertaken.

The trick is now practically done. When the pack is received back from the gentleman who has examined it, the palmed "four" is added to the top card and both, held as one, shown to the company. With the thumb on face and fingers at the back, these two cards are pushed into vest opening on the lower left side, the card nearer the body being slid out of sight with the thumb, leaving the "four" protruding for about half its length.

A series of well-arranged moves for showing a pack to consist of cards all alike is to be found on page 6 of "A Dozen of Magic," by A. C. P. Medrington.



A.J.A.X. 2.

Readers of my "Deceptive Conceptions in Magic" will doubtless recall a novelty with the above title. Here is a comedy version of the same idea. After the pack has been shuffled, the performer deals two cards to an assistant who has been persuaded to assist, and two cards to himself, at the same time explaining to his audience that should the assistant's cards prove to be of higher value than his own, the assistant must receive *one* cheer. Should, however, the reverse prove to be the case, the assistant must give the conjuror a cheer. The respective pairs are then examined, when it is discovered that the assistant is the loser, his cards being a Jack and a six, whilst the conjuror has a Jack and a nine. The four cards are next lodged against a little easel with their faces to the board, and assistant is informed that if he can guess which are the two Jacks he will receive *two* cheers. Whichever pair he nominate, he must win, for performer confidentially tells him that they are *all Jacks*, showing such to be the case at the same time. He is now told *sotto voce*, that when asked again to say which are the Jacks, he must reply "They are *all Jacks*," whereupon the audience will doubtless give him *three* cheers. Upon receiving the dictated reply to his final interrogation, performer turns the cards round and shows them to be lettered ones, reading A.J.A.X., an apparently plural singular.

The manipulation of the various changes offers almost endless scope for ingenuity and dexterity, but probably the simplest method is the best. Here is a delightfully simple series of moves which demands

no higher manipulative skill than the palming of four cards.

The four lettered cards, which must obviously have the same backs as the pack employed for this presentation, are placed on top in word order. Upon these must be added three Jacks, any nine, any six, and, finally, the last Jack, which is left as the actual top card. Before the shuffle, if the cards are to leave the conjuror's hands, the top ten cards must be palmed off, but a false shuffle to leave the top stock intact is all that really need be done.

The first two cards, i.e., the Jack and the six, are dealt to the assistant and the next two, i.e., the Jack and the nine, the conjuror deals to himself. Before pack is laid aside, the two top cards, the Jacks, are palmed in right hand. The respective pairs having been shown to the company, the two "pip" cards are dropped on pack before the two Jacks, the latter thus becoming the top cards of pack. The two palmed Jacks are added in the act of squaring the pack.

Before executing the next change, it is imperative that the two "pip" cards which rest on the letter cards, be shifted to another part of the pack. This is very simply done by means of the "two-handed shift," whilst giving the gentleman his instructions to say "They are *all* Jacks." All being ready for the final change, the four letter cards are palmed off and the pack laid on table. So soon as the four Jacks have been returned to top of pack, after being shown to the audience, the right hand in the act of squaring the cards adds the four palmed letter cards. *Verb. sap.*



A.J.A.X. 3.

Here is a third version of this trick which I give for the reason that, being the simplest of the three it may appeal to those workers with whom dexterity is not the "long suit." Perhaps an outline of the presentation will be the best way to convey the effect.

"Will you please shuffle my pack, sir? That is very kind of you indeed. I wonder whether you will put yourself further in my debt by selecting a packet of four of these cards. Don't look at the faces of them, sir, but just allow me to place them against this little wooden easel. Now, sir, like human beings, cards have affinities, your particular affinity being one of these four. Further, when I ask you to select one of them you will naturally be attracted to that affinity. Will you please touch one? A Jack! The Jack has an affinity for you, sir. We will mix the cards and you shall try again. Now please say any number between one and four. Three? The Jack. You see, you cannot help yourself. I will mix them again. Another number please. Four? Yet again, a Jack. Ha! I know what is in your mind; you naturally conclude that they are *all* Jacks. Between you and me, they are; but don't let our friends in front know or they will think the same as you do, that it's a stupid trick. For the last time, sir, which do you choose as the Jack? You say they are *all* Jacks. No sir! There's only one here, A.J.A.X., the well-known inventor of lightning conductors and presumably an old affinity of yours. You will recall that he died with a broken heart because the London County Council wouldn't instal his conductors on their trams!"

With the knowledge already in his possession, the reader will require but little instruction in this trick. The A.J.A.X. cards and the four Jacks are added to the pack after it has been shuffled, and the top four cards, the Jacks, are forced upon the gentleman who volunteers to assist. His second selection of the same Jack is not a chance, but a deliberate "force" by means of the dodge explained in my "*Original Magical Creations*," on page 29. The shuffle of the four cards must, therefore, leave the first selected Jack at the third position when the cards are replaced.

The third choice may be perfectly free, because the onlookers, immediately after, are shown that all the cards are Jacks. As each one is exhibited it is returned to the top of the pack, which a few seconds previously had been faced, that is to say, the top half of the pack by means of a "half-pass," was brought to face the lower. A quick but quiet revolution of the pack thus brings the letter cards uppermost, and completes the manipulation.



Red and Blue.

(A "Jumbo" Card Effect.)

I must preface my description of this trick by informing those of my readers who may not know it that the "Jumbo" giant cards are manufactured with their back designs in either blue or red, the finish being the same in each case.

The experiment is a novelty from the standpoint that, whereas in the orthodox card trick the interest is focussed entirely upon the face of the card or cards, here the interest is centred on the backs. This is the effect. From a pack of giant cards with dark blue backs, the two black aces are removed and lodged faces outward against the back of the pack, which is made to stand upright by any means at the disposal of the performer. From the red-backed pack, the two red aces are removed, and both they and the pack are similarly treated. Having reminded the audience that the colour of the aces is a certain guide to the colour of the backs, the conjuror changes the backs of the red aces into black and vice versa.

Both packs need slight preparation. The red aces from the black pack are transferred to the red pack and, similarly, the black aces from the red pack are added to the black pack. The two ordinary aces which thus become duplicated in each pack, are made to adhere face to face by means of a dampened sponge dabbed on the face of one of them. Each of these "double" cards goes on top of its own pack.

The presentation is commenced by selecting the pairs of aces from each pack, the faces of cards, for reasons which need no comment, being directed to audience as this is being done.

Each pair is lodged faces to front against the pack from which it is taken. The audience is next informed that the motive for choosing black aces from the dark pack and red aces from the red pack is to

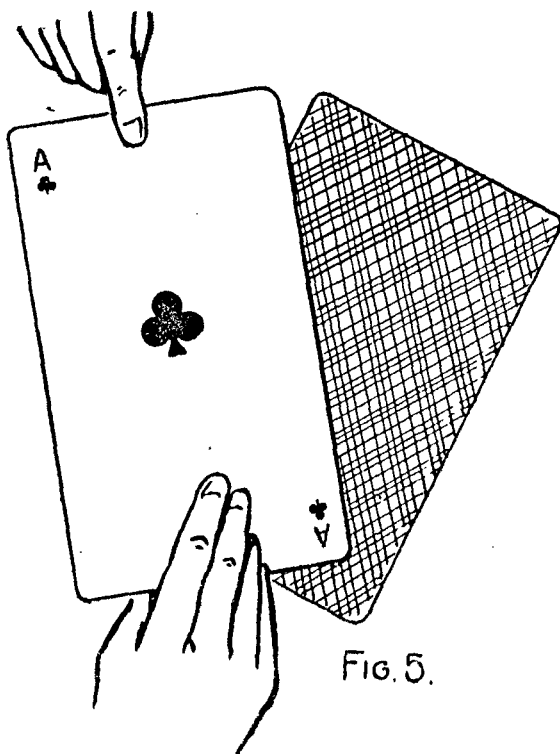
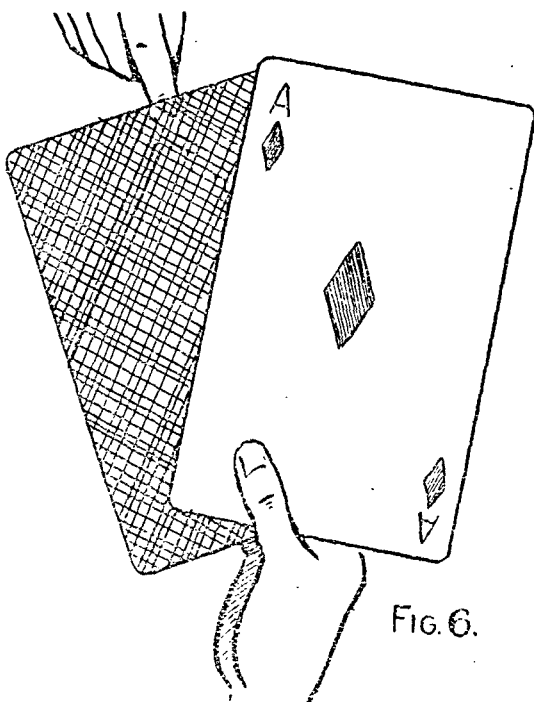


FIG. 5.

prevent confusion, the backs of both pairs being shown to correspond with the packs against which they rest. Of course, the double card added in each case accounts for this deception.

A further subtlety is imposed on the audience before the actual transformation is made evident. One black and one red ace are taken in right hand and held as shown in Fig. 5, the index finger of the left

hand resting on the black ace. "For the last time, let me impress upon your minds that the black ace has a dark back," remarks the conjuror at same time turning round the two cards, the left index finger going with them so that when viewed from the reverse side matters appear as illustrated in Fig. 6. Actually, the two cards are slid across each other as the hand is turned, the greater movement of the wrist covering the lesser with the fingers. The forefinger of left hand which remains practically still as the cards are reversed



is thus automatically caused to rest on the ace with the black back. Each ace is then laid against its rightfully coloured pack, and the same procedure applied to the second pair of aces concludes the trick.

Pictures and Pips.

The tricks here employed lead the audience to suppose that a packet of picture cards and a packet of pip cards change places, although the respective heaps are kept quite apart.

First of all remove from the pack any 13 pip cards and lay them in a packet face upward on table. Then collect the 13 Court cards and, in the act of showing and counting them, contrive that the two cards which form the top and bottom of packet are as nearly alike as possible, say, the King of Clubs and the Jack of Clubs. Drop this packet of Court cards on the upturned pips, and straightway pick up the lot and show them in a fan to the audience, the cards overlapping from left to right. As the fan is closed, the little finger of the left hand is inserted above the two last Court cards so that the "double-handed pass" can be made to bring the last Court card to the top. If the "shift" be neatly made, the onlookers will be conscious of no change in the order of the cards, although actually, reading from the bottom, the cards will be, say, Jack of Clubs, 13 pip cards and 12 Court cards. The reason for the top and bottom cards of the picture packet being as alike as possible is now self-evident.

With the packet in the left hand showing the Jack of Clubs on bottom, state that the 13 pip cards will be placed on the right side of the table. Count, therefore, 13 cards from top *without disturbing their order*, and show the bottom card, which, being a pip card, inferentially confirms the action. Now show bottom card of packet in hand, and say, "I shall lay here on

my left the heap of 13 Court cards." The cards are counted, bottom card shown again and the packet laid on the left of table.

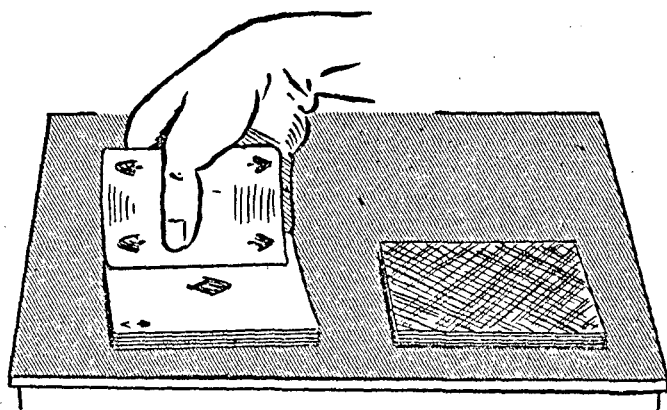
As matters now stand, the packet on left consists of pip cards with a Court card at bottom, and the heap on right is made up of Court cards with a pip card at bottom. Whilst talking, the remainder of the pack is picked up in an abstracted way, so that the action, if noted at all, is only subconsciously observed by the audience.

I will now, in a few words, tell what actually transpires, leaving detailed explanation of the move upon which the trick depends to follow. In the act of turning over the left hand packet, the bottom card is simultaneously taken away with right hand and added to the top of the right-hand packet as it is turned over to show the collection of Court cards. The bottom card of the right hand packet, which is likewise carried off as the Court cards are turned over, is added to the pack a second after its removal.

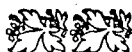
The packets must be laid *close together*, about six inches from edge of table, and be so placed that the sides and not the ends can be lifted by passing the thumb underneath. With the fingers, the heap is drawn to the edge of the table, where it is turned over with the thumb which, previously slightly moistened, slides off the bottom card at the same time. Without the slightest pause or hesitation, the card is added to the top of the other packet which is similarly treated. Instantly the second pack is turned over, the hand casually goes to pack and gets rid of the card which was surreptitiously taken away as the packet was turned over. The whole process should not occupy more than three seconds, and must be performed in two backward and forward sweeps of hand and wrist, a fifth backward movement accounting for the final

disposal of the pip card on top of the pack. The move is absolutely illusive if correctly performed with an inward bend of the wrist, as the card is slid off the bottom of packet.

FIG. 7.



Of course, at the conclusion of the trick, the pips packet will be one card short, a discrepancy which can easily be adjusted by "false counting" the 12 cards as thirteen, or by adding the pip card to it in the act of fanning as a sort of flourish finish. But nothing is gained by this extra trouble, the audience having no grounds for suspicion on these lines.



A Card Comedy.

Strictly speaking, this particular item is out of place in a book devoted to the artistic side of card conjuring, but I include it for the benefit of those performers who combine burlesque effects with their serious work.

The item involves complicity. The conjurer's own assistant, or a presumed stranger in the audience, is asked to select a card, and after noting it, to replace it in the pack. After the usual shuffling and cutting has been performed in rather exaggerated manner, the assistant is asked to say a number between 1 and 52. Supposing that 15 be named, the card at that position from top of pack is removed and shown as the drawn card. To the apparent discomfort of the conjurer, the assistant very emphatically disavows it, and after a few words of dispute, states that the card he drew was the Ace of Clubs. "My dear sir, that is impossible," asserts the conjuror, "for the reason that all the cards of my pack are alike." The pack is shown to consist entirely of Fours of Hearts. "What sort of game do you call that?" enquires the assistant. "All fours," the performer replies, and straightway gets on with something else.



The Homing Aces.

Written by Mr. George Bealby.

[Mr. Bealby always admired this experiment, and with the thoroughness that characterises everything that he undertakes, he wrote this description many years ago, so that neither he nor I should forget it. I include it here with his full permission, a kindness for which I am deeply grateful.—S.C.]

Most conjurors are acquainted with the ingenious little trick invented by Stanley Collins, known as "The Sympathetic Aces." The four aces are placed face upwards on a cloth or napkin, each ace lying near one of the four corners respectively, and under cover of two pieces of thin card, held one in each hand, the cards are successively covered, again exposed, etc., the ultimate object being to "get away" the ace from the top right-hand corner beneath the cardboard held in the right hand, this shift being covered by the left hand laying down the other piece of cardboard in the right-hand top corner, where (unknown to the spectators) the card is *not*. One by one, the aces are passed "through the cloth" from beneath, until finally, all four are found under the cardboard at the left-hand top corner. The secret of the trick consisted chiefly in the fact that one of the four aces was not as innocent as it appeared, being, in reality, double-faced. It was not long before the inventor of this pretty trick set to work to do away altogether with what he regarded as a grave defect, namely, the necessity of employing a faked card. In this he ultimately succeeded, and he very kindly explained the complete trick and handed it on to me.

I shall now endeavour to describe, step by step, the various moves which make this one of the most perfect table tricks that I have ever had the pleasure of seeing. In the hands of the dexterous inventor, this illusion is absolutely perfect.

For the sake of clearness, we will imagine the four aces to be arranged upon the cloth as follows:-

Ace of Spades 1	Ace of Diamonds 2
3 Ace of Hearts	4 Ace of Clubs

The performer explains, in laying down the cards, that the two red aces are extremely shy, and consequently prefer to make their journeys incognito. So saying, he turns No. 2 and No. 3 face downwards, and straightaway proceeds to execute the opening move of the trick which remains unaltered, and need not be described in detail; suffice it to say that the cardboard held in the left hand is laid upon No. 2, where the ace is *not*, the ace of diamonds being secretly removed under cover of the cardboard in the right hand. To

facilitate this shift, he takes care when laying down the ace of diamonds, to bend the card slightly, rendering the back somewhat concave, so that its edges are not "flush" with the cloth. This gives an easy grip of the card, when secretly picking it up beneath the cardboard held in the right hand.

The move I am about to describe, does away with the faked card entirely, Stanley Collins having devised a special sleight for this purpose.

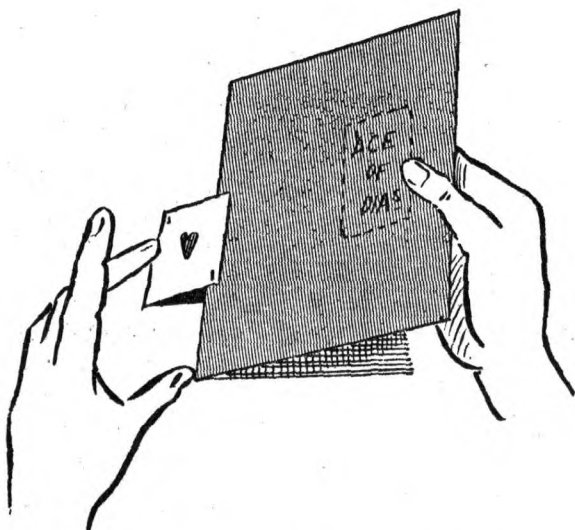
This subtlety is really the backbone of the trick, and before going over the various moves of the trick itself, I will endeavour to make this particular change clear. The subsequent description of the trick will then not be interrupted by the explanation of this shift in detail.

The card about to be changed, lies face downwards on the performer's left and is slightly bent in a convex manner, as if about to perform the three card trick. The slip of cardboard is held in the right hand, with the card (about to be exchanged for the one upon the table) held by the fingers beneath, the thumb upon the top surface of the cardboard. In the circumstances now under discussion, this card would, as a matter of fact, be the ace of diamonds, the back of the card being next to the underside of the cardboard, that is to say the card is face downwards. Roughly indicating the position of the aces upon the cloth with the cardboard held in the right hand, the conjurer remarks "Here on the left we have face downwards the blushing ace of hearts—allow me to show it to you."

He "steadies" the card by placing the second finger of the left hand upon its left edge, at the same time slipping the cardboard underneath the right-hand side of the ace of hearts, in the natural movement of turning it face upwards. This he does, proving it to be the ace of hearts. He now repeats the same move-

ment, bringing the card once more face downwards and it is in the repetition of this turn over that the change is accomplished in the following manner.

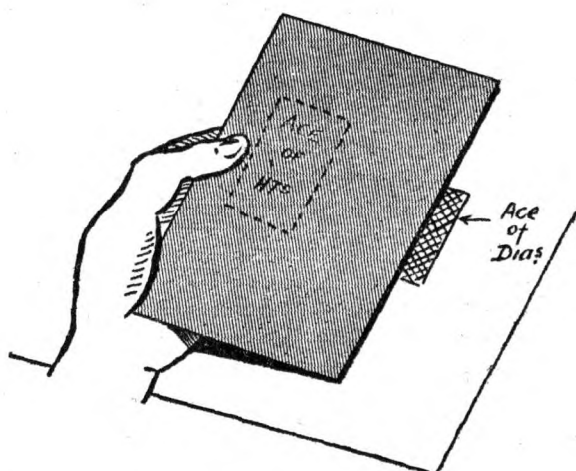
FIG. 8.



The piece of cardboard is slipped underneath the card from the right-hand side to within about half-an-inch of the left-hand edge, where the second finger of the left hand holds it to the table. As the card is in the act of turning over (face downwards) this second finger gives an upward pressure, raising the edge of the cardboard about an inch above the table, the card automatically sliding beneath it. The card concealed beneath the cardboard in the right hand (the ace of diamonds) is held as near to the right-hand edge of the cardboard as is possible without revealing its presence, and as the ace of hearts is slipped beneath by the upward pressure of the second finger of the left hand,

the right-hand side of the cardboard is kept as close to the surface of the table as possible. The piece of cardboard, therefore, at the moment of the turn over, slopes downwards from the left hand to the right. The ace of diamonds is released by the right hand, the cardboard with the ace of hearts beneath being carried away in the left.

FIG. 9.



After considerable practice this change can be smoothly and deliberately accomplished, and amply rewards the time expended upon it, the illusion being complete. I have above emphasized the exact position of the sloping cardboard at the moment of the change, for this I found a severe "pit-fall" when practising this particular sleight.

In the early stages of attempting this change, one is very liable to be confronted with failure, brought about by the two cards "interlocking," as it were, the result being that instead of the ace of diamonds being left behind face downwards on the table, this card is

supported beneath the cardboard by the other ace being carried away in the left hand. If, however, the upward pressure be given with the second finger of the left hand in the manner I have already pointed out, while the right-hand edge of the cardboard is kept down as low as possible, this difficulty will be successfully overcome. Having now described the sleight, we can proceed to consider its application to the improved version of the foregoing trick. For clearness' sake, in speaking of this sleight, I shall refer to it as "the turn-over change."

The opening move remains unaltered, and we can therefore take it for granted that this is already accomplished. The condition of things upon the cloth is, therefore, as follows: the ace of spades lies face upwards at position No. 1, at position No. 2 lies the cardboard dropped there by the left hand, at the moment when the right hand brought away the ace of diamonds beneath the other piece of cardboard held in the right hand. The ace of hearts lies at position No. 3, face downwards, while the ace of clubs is openly exposed at position No. 4. The performer calls attention to the aces in turn, indicating them with the cardboard held in the right hand, beneath which is hidden the ace of diamonds. This card the audience is persuaded still remains under the cardboard at position No. 2.

The performer, having thus indicated the covered ace of diamonds and the upturned ace of clubs, now turns the ace of hearts face upwards with the cardboard held in the right hand, and in again turning it over face downwards, the "turn over" change is executed. The conjurer covers the ace of spades with the cardboard held in the left hand, leaving beneath it the concealed ace of hearts. He picks up the supposed ace of hearts (in reality the ace of diamonds) with the right hand, and proceeds to "pass it through the cloth." The card is left, still face downwards,

near the left-hand side of the cloth. "Ladies and gentlemen, if I have been successful, we shall now find the ace of hearts has passed through the cloth and joined the ace of spades." He raises the cardboard at position No. 1, proving this to be the case. He replaces the cardboard at position No. 1, remarking, "We will now endeavour to do the same thing with the ace of clubs."

He passes the ace of clubs face downwards beneath the cloth, and as quickly changes his mind and withdraws it, laying it face downwards on the cloth, at the same time remarking, "Ah, I see you suspect that I have an ace already concealed beneath the cardboard. Allow me to prove to you such is not the case." This he does, showing that only the ace of spades and the ace of hearts are beneath the cardboard at position No. 1.

The reader will already have made a shrewd guess as to what happens when the ace of clubs is momentarily concealed beneath the cloth. This card, quickly turned over, is grasped by the fingers of the left hand beneath the cloth at its left-hand edge, and the ace of diamonds rapidly withdrawn in its place. As the performer says the words, "Allow me to prove to you such is not the case" (see foregoing paragraph) he raises the cardboard with the right hand, exposing the two aces, and immediately passes it beneath the thumb of the left hand, the left hand bringing it away with the ace of clubs beneath it. The movement is made in one continuous "swoop," and forms a complete illusion. Picking up the supposed ace of clubs with the right hand (in reality it is the ace of diamonds) face downwards, he says, "I will pass the ace of clubs beneath the cloth, and cover over these two aces—so." He replaces the cardboard with the left hand at position No. 1, leaving with it the additional ace, namely the genuine ace of clubs. The card (ace of diamonds)

held in the right hand, is now passed beneath the cloth and grasped *face upwards* by the fingers of the left hand beneath the edge of the cloth. Again in one continuous movement the cardboard is lifted from position No. 1 with the right hand, passed beneath the thumb of the left, and instantly the left hand drops the cloth, bringing away the ace of diamonds, face upwards beneath the cardboard. As the cardboard is removed from position No. 1, the ace of clubs is seen to have penetrated the cloth, and to be lying there with the ace of spades and the ace of hearts. The performer drops the cardboard held in the left hand once more over the three aces, remarking, "We have now only one more ace to attend to, namely the ace of diamonds, which, as you know, remains under this piece of cardboard on my right." He indicates the cardboard at position No. 2. "If you watch me very closely you may be able actually to see it fly across; all I do is to tap the cardboard three times, so, and, you see, it has instantly departed on its journey to join the three aces already here." He raises the cardboard at position No. 2, showing there is nothing beneath it, and the lifting of the cardboard at position No. 1, disclosing all four aces together, brings this ingenious trick to a conclusion.

The pieces of cardboard should be as flexible and "bending" as possible, but, of course, not so thin as to render them in the smallest degree transparent. About $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 7 in. is a convenient size.

The cloth I prefer to use is a piece of black velvet about 2 ft. square. If performing the trick with a borrowed duster or napkin, care should be taken to lay down the same with the "hemmed" edges uppermost. Any carelessness in this respect would lead to the cards beneath not sliding smoothly away, the hemming on the under side causing them to "catch" on the edge of the cloth.

The "Esscee" Cards and Cords.

This novelty which is really a cut-string trick, I include in this volume for the reason that the effect depends for its success upon the manipulation of the pack of cards through which the strings are threaded.

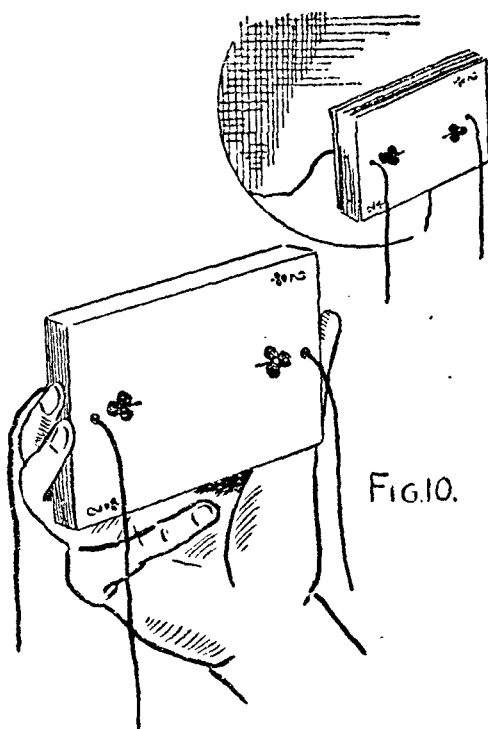


Fig. 10 conveys a general idea of the apparatus as it appears before the actual trick is performed. The pack has two holes punched right through it, each

hole being about half-an-inch from the end and mid-way across. It is important that these holes be very accurately punched so that no matter how often the ends of the cards are reversed, the two holes always offer perfectly smooth interiors. A pack so prepared can be used for all sleight-of-hand purposes without complicating the working in any way both before and after the effect I am about to explain.

When the trick is presented to the company, two lengths of narrow tape each about 30 ins. long are introduced and someone is requested to thread them through the two holes which are punched in pack

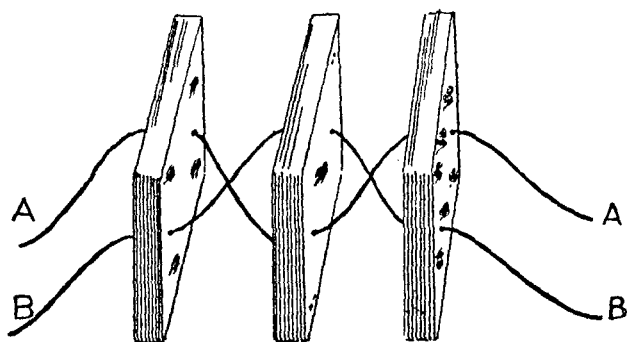
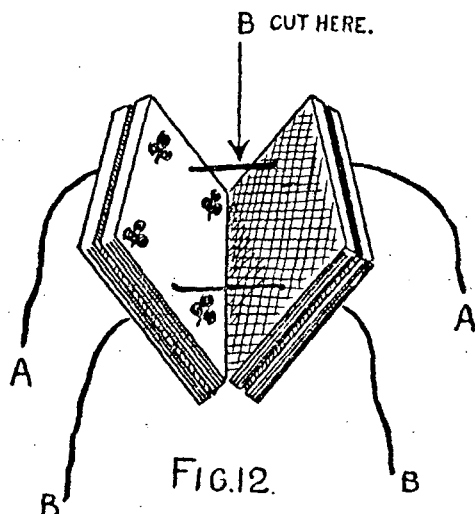


FIG. 11.

specially to receive them. The trick permits the choice of either tape to be made, the one selected being offered for severance by opening the pack at the centre. Now although the tape is actually cut through with the scissors, so soon as the halves of pack are brought together the complete length is pulled to and fro several times, and finally drawn entirely clear of the pack. Everything may then be examined.

The trick is simplicity itself. The principle of it is that instead of the selected tape being severed, actually it is the other one which receives the cut. To prepare for this, all that is necessary is to reverse the ends of about a dozen cards which form the top of pack and similarly to reverse a like packet of cards on the bottom. This means that the three divisions of pack, if separated, would appear as shown in Fig. 11. Obviously now, if the middle packet be opened at the centre and the string cut through at B (Fig. 12), the cut, although apparently in the tape A, is in reality, made in tape B.



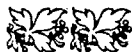
The trick entails very little practice, the misdirection of attention whilst the top and bottom packets are turned round being the only real difficulty. This I perform without moving my hands out of sight of the audience by very carefully rehearsed timing of a laugh; but in any case a turn to the left to procure a pair of scissors gives ample cover for both operations which together only occupy a second of time. Before

the cut, the tapes should be pulled backwards and forwards once or twice, the pack being held in right hand, as shown in Fig. 10, as this is done. If the ends of the cards are not gripped, there is a tendency for the centre portion to be levered out of the pack when the tape is pulled.

The selection of tape having been made, that end of the pack is turned towards the audience with the ends of tape hanging equally each side. The other tape, however, is casually pulled until only about two inches protrude from left side, the greater portion of it hanging down on the right. Open the pack at centre with the thumb and finger of left hand and request that the selected tape be cut in halves. This having been done and the severed ends shown, the pack is closed and held in right hand again, as shown in Fig. 10. The tape can now be drawn to and fro and eventually pulled quite clear of the pack. Whilst the examination of the tape is being made, the pack is passed to left hand and the second tape carelessly drawn out by its long end and thrown on the table to be inspected by whomsoever cares to take the trouble. The length of three or four inches of tape that is left in pack can now be quietly disposed of to leave the pack free for any further use.

This trick can be presented with the "Jumbo" cards with little or no more difficulty, the turn of the body to secure the scissors affording ample time and cover to make the necessary manipulations.

A later version of this same effect but *with the tapes of different colours*, I will elucidate in a future volume of miscellaneous tricks.



Cards, Crayon and Cross-Words.

Eight cards, selected with the utmost freedom, have their values magically spelt out in the now familiar manner upon a folded Cross-word blank form kept in view during the working out of the experiment by being wedged under the clip of a mechanical pencil.

The back-bone of the trick is a novel and very deceptive "force" of the eight cards which are spelt out in the Cross-word puzzle. The audience is shown a frame of the child's drawing-slate variety, behind the clear glass of which are displayed 52 miniature playing cards comprising the complete pack, and it is emphasised that the complement of cards is in evidence. The back is then removed and although the eight cards are freely selected from the face down pack on glass, each of them is a deliberate "force." The principle involved is delightfully simple and for the reason that it cannot fail relieves the nervous performer of apprehension.

To deal first with the frame itself, let me say that it is nothing more than the usual juvenile affair with clear glass, and a removable back, painted (say) black on the side which faces the glass. Faces down upon the glass, 52 cards must be arranged in four rows of seven cards each and three rows of eight cards each. The first row must consist of three "sixes" and the four "sevens" or the four "sixes" and three "sevens," the "sixes" and "sevens" alternating. The second row must consist entirely of "fives." The

third row must be made up of all "eights." The fourth row comprises all "threes." The fifth row must have all "eights," but for obvious reasons their *suits* must differ from those in the third row. All "Kings" must be in the sixth row and for the seventh row another set of "threes" must be arranged, the suits, of course, varying from those in the fourth row. When the back is fixed in position, it is important to arrange that it be tightly clamped to prevent any movement of the cards as the frame is exhibited.

The fake that works in conjunction with the

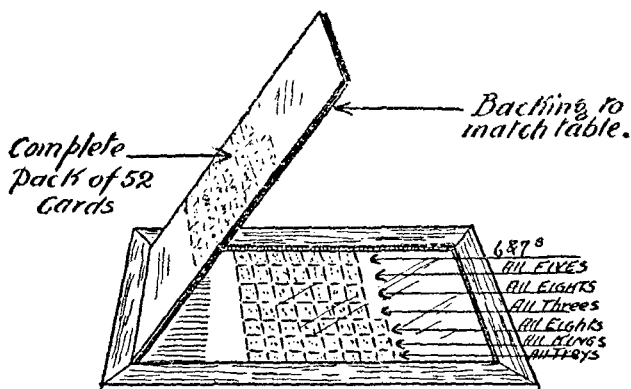


FIG. 13.

frame is very easily procured. To a very thin piece of cardboard which must match in colour the inside back of frame, 52 cards of a miniature pack are glued faces upward in any haphazard order. This piece of card is then stuck to a sheet of glass slightly smaller than that in frame, so that it may rest easily but accurately within the inner edge of bead of frame. With this faked front over the true glass of frame, the

illusion of there being 52 different cards inside is most deceptively conveyed to the audience. After being exhibited the frame is laid face down on table whilst the back is removed to permit the cards to be selected as if from a tray, the fake, of course, being left behind on table when frame is lifted. Now if only one card be noted in each row (with the exception of the first, from which two cards are selected) obviously only eight different card values may be chosen (?) It is advisable to have the back of the cardboard on fake made to match the table top so that it will not obtrude its presence if the trick be performed at close quarters. The best way, however, is to lay the removable back on top of the fake.

Before detailing the mode of presentation, a few words on the Cross-word puzzle part of the trick are necessary. I employ a tablet of "Daily Mail" Cross-word blank forms which can be purchased from most booksellers for 6d. On the centre of one of these forms is drawn *in pencil* the 49 square Cross-word puzzle illustrated in Fig. 14. Nos. 1 across and down spell the values of the two cards, which alone comprise the first row of cards in frame.

No. 2 spells the value of card in second row.

No. 3 spells the value of card in third row.

No. 4 spells the value of card in fourth row.

No. 5 spells the value of card in fifth row.

No. 6 spells the value of card in sixth row.

No. 7 spells the value of card in seventh row.*

This puzzle sheet I fold with a minute piece of black crayon within it until a packet of size $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by

* The word "trex" is often used for "three" by card players.

$1\frac{1}{4}$ in. is made, and then deposit it under the top end of pad until it is wanted.

If a mechanical pencil embellished with a spring clip be put in left breast pocket, the exchange of packets is ready to be made. The tablet is picked up by its top end between right thumb above and fingers below, the hidden folded sheet being taken at



FIG. 14.

same time. The top sheet of pad is torn off, folded into halves and a minute piece of black crayon dropped in. The folds made four times bring the sheet to the

same size as the concealed one, both of which are held openly so that the two together appear as one only. The blank one must now be made to change places with the other; that is to say, it must be brought immediately under thumb. This is quite easily and naturally accomplished whilst elevating and showing the little packages. The change is effected whilst passing the packet to the left hand, the thumb pushing up its packet as the fingers draw the other out of sight into roots of fingers. So soon as the left hand receives its packet, the right hand, without any undue haste, goes into left breast pocket for the pencil and leaves the blank packet behind.

I commence the experiment by requesting that several of my audience will identify themselves with numbers, at the same time distributing seven cards, numbered from one to seven, to as many of them. After the frame has been shown, I approach No. 1 with the request that he will turn over and look at *two cards together* from the first row and write the value of the selections upon the card already in his possession. Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 do likewise, save that they turn over and memorise the value of but *one* card each. The exchange of the Cross-word packets having been made, I inform the company that "Crossword-puzzleitis" is really the result of an onslaught by Cross-word germs, which germs can usually be found skylarking around lead pencils. Someone is asked to hold the pencil with its little attached packet and listen to the highly intelligent germs making a puzzle.

In the case of person No. 1, *two* cards were noted, for the reason that No. 1 on the puzzle has both an "across" and a "down" spelling. All the other assistants have one only and the values of these are spelt either "across" or "down" as shown in the

puzzle.

Whilst this is admittedly but a drawing-room effect, it is a novelty which can very readily be amplified for stage requirements.



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